
School Programs Commodity Update

What's New in the Food Distribution Program for Schools

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USDA Will Launch A Web-Based Commodity Ordering System

USDA has developed and is testing an automated commodity ordering system that will permit States and locals to enter food orders directly into a centralized food ordering computer system. USDA worked with two school representatives selected by the American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) to help develop the system to make sure that it meets your needs. The representatives are: Cindy Brooks of the Seymour, Connecticut School District and Amy Lins of the San Jose, California Unified School District.

This web-based system will allow commodity

information to flow easily between school districts, States, USDA, and industry.

The prototype application will support food order submissions for school and other feeding programs over the Internet. It will also provide you information on your entitlement level, transfers, commodity recalls, and current delivery order status. The system has auto-messaging features that will allow you to send quick email messages to your State distributing agency.

Before the system becomes fully operational, USDA and up to six states will be testing the system through the School Year 2003 purchase cycle to ensure that it is user friendly and meets the required specifications.

USDA will offer the new web-based system to States for use in SY 2003/2004, but States will also have the option to continue to use their own ordering and communication systems. //

USDA's New "One-Stop" Commodity Foods Web Site is Moving Forward

FNS is working with our partners at the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to complete the development of a one-stop web site that will give schools and States access to a wealth of information related to the USDA commodity food

purchasing programs and nutrition assistance programs.

This one-stop site will link schools and States to a variety of commodity information that is currently maintained on several web sites. You will be able to locate information by USDA Agency, by Commodity Program, or by Topic. The site also will include a very robust search engine that will permit you to locate specific information by keyword or phase.

Once this site is launched, schools and other visitors to the site will be just a click of a mouse away from having access to:

- food purchase and delivery order information
- foods available lists
- commodity specifications for products purchased by AMS and FSA for schools
- bid announcements
- an online database of all commodity fact sheets
- marketing news
- food safety information
- hold and recall procedures
- State processing information
- recipes
- online State Distributing Agency Lists, and
- links to partner organizations such as ACDA and ASFSA.

Most importantly, schools and States will be able to link directly to the FNS Food Ordering Entry System, which will enable eligible schools and States to place food orders online and retrieve reports to help them monitor and track their food orders.

That's right! This one-stop site will serve as your single point of contact to all USDA commodity information and provide a network for schools, States and other Federal Agencies to share resources and contacts with one another. The site should be launched later this year. We'll keep you posted. //

Remember...

March 4-8, 2002

National School Breakfast Week

Available -- Bonus Beef!

USDA recently approved a \$30 million bonus beef purchase for schools and other outlets. Schools will be offered uncooked chuck roasts, in 40-pound cases. The roasts will average 5-10 pounds each and there will be about 4-8 to a box.

Deliveries to States will begin the last half of March and continue through the end of June. Fact sheets have been developed and are available on FDP's web site at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/FACT_SHEETS/factheet.htm

The bonus beef purchase is needed at this time for various reasons. Basically, cattle producers were losing about \$100 a head due to depressed prices in the grain-fed beef market. Grain-fed beef is grown specifically for consumers making it a more consistent, tender and flavorful product.

Several unanticipated factors most likely contributed to the depressed prices. One factor was the tragic 9/11 attacks. This caused a ripple affect from the tourist industry to the restaurant market down to the cattle market. The drop in tourism decreased diners and affected the consumption of beef in restaurants. Another factor is the increase in the average weight of the cattle, thus placing more beef on the market. In addition, exports of grain-fed beef have declined.

These sudden changes in the beef market are classic examples of how critical our food program outlets are to agriculture producers. //

ASFSA Gives FAME Award to FDD's Director

The American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) gives FAME *Silver Friend of Child Nutrition Award* to Les Johnson, USDA's Director of the Food Distribution Division. This is the first time a federal employee has received this award. The FAME awards are considered the most prestigious acknowledgement of success in the school foodservice industry.

The award was presented to Mr. Johnson at the recent ASFSA Industry and Technology Conference for supporting child nutrition beyond the scope of his normal professional duties. He has been the prime mover and leader of USDA's unwavering effort to dramatically improve and streamline the USDA commodity programs.

The initiative has been an unparalleled joint effort of four USDA agencies, ASFSA, the American Commodity Distribution Association, and other commodity program partners and stakeholders. USDA would like to thank all the groups who have worked on this and other projects that are improving the commodity programs. The input received has been vital to the commodity programs' success and is benefiting millions of school children and customers across the nation each day.

National Nutrition Month®

March is National Nutrition Month®. National Nutrition Month® (NNM) is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by the American Dietetic Association (ADA).

The campaign is designed to focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. NNM also promotes ADA and its members to the public and the media as a valuable and credible source of timely, scientifically based food and nutrition information. For additional information, visit the web site at [National Nutrition Month Information](http://www.usda.gov/fns)



Browse New Items on FDP's Web Site

The Food Distribution Program's web site continues to grow. If you access the USDA FNS web site at <http://www.usda.gov/fns> and click on Food Distribution, you will find:

- Changes to the State Distributing Agency Contact List
- Downloadable copies of the FNS-7 and FNS-57 delivery and shipping forms from the FDD Publication/Forms web site
- A new commodity fact sheet for Turkey Taco Filling
- A new commodity fact sheet for Beef Chuck Roast, Frozen
- A new commodity fact sheet for Red Raspberries, Frozen
- A new commodity fact sheet for Blackberry, Marion, Frozen
- The Commodity File List dated November 15, 2001
- The Average Price of Commodity Cheese and Nonfat Dry Milk Products for SY 2003

Commodity Complaint Hotline

1-800-446-6991
or email

[usda-fns-
commoditycomplaints@fns.usda.gov](mailto:usda-fns-commoditycomplaints@fns.usda.gov)

Comments

If you have any questions or comments on our products or service, we have an email address specifically for this purpose: fdd-pst@fns.usda.gov or you can write to Food Distribution Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 520, Alexandria, VA 22302. □

Acronym List

ACDA	American Commodity Distribution Association
ADA	American Dietetic Association
AMS	Agricultural Marketing Service
ASFSA	American School Foodservice Association
FAME	Foodservice Achievement Management Excellence
FDD	Food Distribution Division
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
FSA	Farm Service Agency
FSIS	Food Safety and Inspection Service
NNM	National Nutrition Month
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

Prepared by: Program Support Branch, in conjunction with Schools and Institutions Branch, USDA, FNS, FDD